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LIBRARY SCIENCE
LIBRARY

THE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

FORMERLY "THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT"
OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE A.A.L.

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THE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Official Journal of the Association of Assistant Librarians

(Section of the Library Association)

Edited by A. C. Jones, Hornsey Public Libraries.

VOL. 48. No. 5

MAY, 1955

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE

IN VIEW of the recent considerable increase in the amount of work of the Hon. Editor—who is responsible not only for the *Assistant Librarian*, but also for the conduct of the Association's publishing programme—the Council has decided that at the end of this year the post shall be divided into two: Hon. Editor, *Assistant Librarian*, and Hon. Publications Officer. It is likely that the present post of Hon. Publications Officer, which is concerned with the *sale and distribution* of publications, will shortly be abolished, and other arrangements made for that aspect of the Association's work.

The duties which will fall to the two proposed officers are briefly as follows:—

HON. EDITOR, ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

The Hon. Editor will in future be responsible solely for editing the *Assistant Librarian*, which is now published monthly. Copy is sent to the printer approximately one month before publication, and a proof is checked two weeks later. These times are sufficiently flexible to allow for holidays and other interruptions.

The Hon. Editor will remain, as at present, an Officer of the Association, elected annually and responsible to the membership at large. He will be a member of the Council, and will report to the Press and Publications Committee.

HON. PUBLICATIONS OFFICER

The Hon. Publications Officer will be responsible to the Council, through the Press and Publications Committee, for the publishing programme of the Association. He will be concerned chiefly with seeing publications through the press, including correspondence with authors, detailed arrangements with printers (estimates, typographical layout, etc.), proof-reading and distribution of review copies. He will also be required from time to time to investigate the need for certain projected publications, to make preliminary approaches to possible authors, and generally to deal with all matters, except those pertaining to the *Assistant Librarian*, arising from meetings of the Press and Publications Committee, to which he will act as secretary.

The Hon. Publications Officer will be an Officer of the Council, appointed by the Council at its first meeting each year. As such he will have the right to contribute to the discussion of any matter before Council, but may vote only in his own committee.

METHOD OF APPOINTMENT

Hon. Editor. It is open to any two members of the Association to put forward a nominee for the post of Hon. Editor at the Annual Election, and any such nominee may be appointed. It has been the custom, however, for the Council to consider all applications submitted to it before-

hand, with the object of putting one forward as the Council's own nominee. Since the Council consists of representatives of all Divisions, this has been found to be the most satisfactory way of determining the most generally acceptable candidate.

Hon. Publications Officer. In order that the 1956 Council may appoint Officers of the Council (including the new Hon. Publications Officer) without delay at its January meeting, it is important that the 1955 Council should have the opportunity of discussing nominations and making firm recommendations to its successor.

Appointments to these two offices will be discussed by the Council at its May and September meetings and the present Hon. Editor has already indicated that he is unable to accept nomination to either post. Any member who would like to be considered for either nomination is invited to write as soon as possible to his own Divisional Hon. Secretary, who will pass all applications approved by the Divisional Committee to the Hon. Secretary of the Association.

It will be obvious that two excellent opportunities exist for members to contribute in a substantial way to the work of the Association, and at the same time to obtain first-hand experience of matters both professional and bibliographical which will be invaluable to them in the future. The Hon. Editor will be very glad to answer enquiries for further specific information about either of the posts, but it is suggested that members wishing to be considered for nomination should write in the first instance to the Hon. Secretary of their own Division.

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

A.A.L. CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

Tutors are urgently required for the following Final sections of the syllabus—Part 1, *Bibliography and Book Section*; Part 2, *Library Organisation and Administration: General Paper* and (a) *Public Libraries*; Part 4 (d), *Historical Bibliography*.

Applications are invited from members who are Fellows of the Library

Association. Forms may be obtained from Mrs. L. Martin, Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road, London, S.E.24.

ASSISTANCE TO READERS

Mr. P. Hepworth, City Librarian of Norwich and author of our *Primer of assistance to readers*, would like to have suggestions and comments from tutors and others for possible incorporation in a new edition.

THAT DATE!

This year's Annual General Meeting will be held at Chaucer House on *Wednesday, May 4th*. This information, though included in the notice in our February issue, was omitted from the otherwise full details published last month. It has since been brought to your attention by all the means at

our disposal, and we hope for another enjoyable and lively meeting. The evening meeting begins at 6.30 p.m., but please refer to the April issue for full details. This issue also contains the Annual Report, and should be brought to the meeting for reference.

WEDNESDAY, 4TH MAY.

SELLING THE LIBRARY SERVICE

The A.A.L. 6th Annual Week-end Conference was held in Birmingham on 1st—3rd April. Theme: *Publicity and Public Relations*.

"Scottish conferences are much more austere," said W. E. Tyler, of Glasgow Library School at 2 o'clock on Sunday morning. The same might be said for most English conferences, but we have not found that they are on that account more successful. The 92 delegates (a misnomer which has crept, like "syndicates," into our conference jargon) at Birmingham crammed a prodigious amount of work and play into their 48 hours, got to grips with their subject as no previous conference in this series has succeeded in doing, and produced a welter of constructive resolutions which will give the A.A.L. Council food for thought for many months to come.

DISPLAY

The first of these resolutions expressed the unanimous opinion of the conference as to the importance of display work in libraries, and its equally deep conviction that the L.A. does not sufficiently appreciate this importance:

1. **The A.A.L. Council should instruct its representatives on the appropriate moderating committees to press for greater emphasis on the subject of display in the L.A. syllabus.**

Delegates were suitably horrified at any suggestion that the syllabus should be changed, but it was pointed out that no changes were in fact necessary; more than one part of the syllabus already included aspects of display work, but these are seldom reflected in the papers set. Display was a technique comparable to cataloguing and classification; extremists held that cat. and class. were but facets of display.

Discussion of the lack of suitably skilled staff, and of time in which to prepare displays, crystallized into the view that both staff and time would be forthcoming when librarians could be convinced, and could convince their employers, of the importance of display. Ideally, display work should be done by full-time professional artists, but co-operation with local art schools, photographic societies and other bodies could be fruitful, and libraries should co-operate in the interchange of good publicity material.

The success of the recent Chaucer House exhibition of Storage Methods prompted the second resolution:—

2. **That an exhibition of commercial display materials should be arranged, initially at Chaucer House, but later if possible to travel in the provinces.** (Discussion leader's note on this: "It was felt that one of the places it had better travel to was the L.A. Conference, for the benefit of the brass").

And arising from this:

3. **That the A.A.L. should arrange a week-end school on display methods, preferably in conjunction with the exhibition of materials.**

One of the reasons put forward for the amateurishness of much of

our present display work was ignorance of such good work as was being done elsewhere, and consequent lack of standards of comparison. This brought forth two recommendations:—

4. **That the editor of the *L. A. Record* should be asked to publish a note inviting the co-operation of librarians in keeping the files of display and publicity material in the L.A. Library up-to-date; and that assistants should try to ensure that copies of photographs of exhibitions and other publicity material in their own libraries are sent to Chaucer House.**
5. **That the editor of the *Assistant Librarian* should consider the introduction of a regular "Display of the Month" feature.**

Finally (on the subject of Display) the recommendation:

6. **That the A.A.L. Press and Publications Committee should consider publishing a *Primer of Display Work and Publicity***

thought not enthusiastically supported in the final general session, was in fact passed on for further consideration.

EXHIBITIONS AND EXTENSION WORK

This, the second of the four headings under which "Publicity and Public Relations" was discussed, was held to include every form of exploitation by the library of its resources, other than by printed publicity and display within the library. A good library service was a pre-requisite—extension work should not be indulged in at the expense of the basic service.

The first problem—whether the basic "good library service" should include books only or other media of communication such as films and gramophone records—was resolved by agreement that if the librarian was to concern himself with books only, then sooner or later other provision would be made for films and gramophone records, and there might well be a General Cultural Officer in charge of all such services. The problem was simply one of definition—is "librarian" to be the name given to the General Cultural Officer, or to one of his subordinates in charge of the book service? Preferring to be General Cultural Officers (to this extent at least), the conference logically proceeded to argue that since they were not concerned solely with *loanable* material, facilities should be provided on the premises for using recorded knowledge which could not readily be taken to members' homes—hence library film shows and record recitals.

Exhibitions outside the library—in shops or cinema foyers, or as part of larger local shows and exhibitions—were considered to have considerable value in getting the library service accepted and understood in the community, but noticeable immediate results should not be expected; the effect would be cumulative over many years. Book weeks, however, were generally held to have little publicity value, and to be not worth the great amount of work involved.

The question, whether the librarian should seek or accept the rôle of cultural leader in the community—beyond the extent referred to above—with all that that involves in the organizing of local societies and other activities, was really at the heart of this session. It was agreed that the answer must vary with local conditions; that the local authority's "6d. rate for culture" which could be levied under the 1948 Local Govern-

ment Act could best be administered by a specially appointed officer on the librarian's staff; and that the librarian's function should be to encourage, co-ordinate, and provide facilities for local group activities, but not actually to organize them himself. Details were given of the various ways in which this is done at Leyton, Dudley and Swindon.

Direct organization by the library staff was, however, considered legitimate in the case of children's activities, and story-hours, stamp clubs and play-readings were cited as examples of valuable services which could be considered to be within the province of the children's librarian.

PRINTED PUBLICITY

Four main types of printed publicity were considered:—

1. Introductions to the library service.
2. Annual reports.
3. Bulletins.
4. Book lists.

Annual reports were discussed with scarcely a kind word. The librarian's report to his committee was not considered to be a suitable piece of publicity outside the committee; typographically it should be comparable with the council minutes. Beyond this, an occasional press hand-out was felt to be just as useful as any ostentatious report. A minority felt that a small "popular" folder might be produced for distribution to the public, or that a five-yearly report might have some value for this purpose.

Bulletins (being usually lists of additions together with articles of local or literary interest) were likewise considered to be not worth the trouble of printing them. But the conference was strongly in favour of both subject lists and periodic lists of new additions—numerous examples were quoted of the use made of these lists by readers, who apparently find that a file of them performs some of the functions of a printed catalogue.

Most discussion centred round the provision of an introduction to the library service, which emerges from this conference as The Most Desirable Piece of Library Printed Publicity. Four functions of such an introduction were considered.

1. To be given to applicants for membership.
2. To be distributed to non-members following a talk to a local society or at other "extra-mural" events.
3. To be distributed to new residents.
4. To be distributed to school leavers, or to school classes after a visit to the library.

After lengthy discussion in all four syndicates the consensus of opinion was that two introductions were necessary:—

1. In general terms, to be given to non-members, containing a general statement of the services available together with the addresses of local libraries and the hours of opening.
2. A detailed guide to the use of the libraries to be given to new members.

It was resolved in general session:

7. That the A.A.L. Council should consider asking the L.A. to produce a model general introduction to the public library service for the guidance of individual local authorities.

NATIONAL PUBLICITY

The first point made in the discussion of this subject was that our prime need *as a profession* was for good *public relations*; nevertheless, there was a need for a national publicity campaign for libraries, in spite of the many bad public library systems which might be embarrassed by such a campaign. (Their embarrassment was in fact regarded as not the least of the objects of such a campaign which, if skilfully directed, could result in local agitation for their improvement).

The conference overwhelmingly supported the view that to achieve both these ends it was urgently necessary that a Public Relations Officer should be appointed by the Library Association. After careful consideration of the possibility of carrying out the proposed duties with the existing staff, it was resolved in general session:—

8. **That the Library Association should be asked to consider appointing a professional Public Relations Officer, and that this conference would support an increase in subscriptions for this purpose should it not be possible to finance such a project in any other way.**

National publicity was then considered by the syndicates in some detail. It was accepted that the money was not available for a high pressure short-term campaign which would have lasting effects, and that the process must rather be continual and slow, using local resources to the full. The first aim should be to enlist the support of influential individuals and groups in local communities, whose co-operation could ensure the success of subsequent publicity. This should be directed towards improving backward systems and increasing the *quality of use* in all libraries. The general campaign should be supplemented by a number of smaller campaigns aimed at special groups (e.g., industry, teachers).

Various ways of financing library publicity were considered, and it was agreed that the cost could legitimately be a charge on the income of the L.A.—i.e., on the subscriptions of members. Though the immediate aim was to improve local services and thus benefit institutional members, nevertheless all librarians stood ultimately to gain from the increased prestige which the profession would acquire. It was not considered practicable to ask for a special government grant for the purpose of *publicity*, but one outcome of a successful publicity campaign might well be government support for *libraries*. Some advantage was to be gained from co-operation with publishers and booksellers in a joint campaign to publicize *books*.

Neither here nor in the session on display was there support for the idea that posters and other display material should be produced nationally; this was expected to be unnecessarily costly and to stifle local initiative.

EXHIBITION

A feature of this conference was the excellent display of libraries' publicity material, selected and mounted by G. W. Harris, of Battersea. It presented a cross-section, good bad and indifferent, of printed and duplicated material which provided an admirable background to the discussions. The final resolution of the general session was—

9. **That consideration should be given to presenting at Chaucer House a similar exhibition to the one shown at the conference.**

SUMMING UP

A notable innovation this year was the introduction of a non-librarian, Mr. Luscott Evans, the advertising expert, to give the opening address on Saturday morning. He introduced a breath of professional fresh air into what might have become a dilettante deliberation, and his shrewd observations were frequently quoted in subsequent sessions when the discussion appeared about to go off the rails.

This excellent introduction, and the exhibition already mentioned, contributed largely to the success of this outstandingly successful conference. The standard of discussion seemed to this observer to be higher than ever before, though it seemed also that the proportion of silent auditors was higher than has been customary. (These two conclusions may perhaps go hand in hand; our conferences must steer a middle way between the popular and the esoteric). The four discussion leaders, Messrs. E. F. Ferry, W. E. Tyler, J. F. Wakeman and A. Wilson, gave excellent guidance to the four groups into which the conference was divided, and have not been surpassed either in the quality of their leadership or in the adequacy of their preparation.

Local arrangements were in the hands of Miss A. H. Higgs and the committee of the Midland Division, who maintained the high standard we have come to expect on these occasions; the libraries of Birmingham welcomed us on Saturday afternoon, and the Coventry staff provided an amusing entertainment on the Friday evening.

As a social occasion also this conference has fulfilled our expectations. The Loughborough reunion announced in our March issue was in full swing when we looked in at 1.30 on Saturday morning; and unions and reunions were indeed fashionable whenever serious discussion flagged. Birmingham may claim to have taken us one step nearer to that early aim of our Association quoted last month by Mr. Sayers: to provide an assistant with friends in every library.

A. C. JONES.

TOO OLD AT THIRTY?

COUNCIL NOTES: MARCH 10

"THIS is the thin edge of the totalitarian wedge." A protest from one of Mr. Bevan's supporters? A *Daily Worker* screamer? Not either of these, but a soberly-delivered contribution to one of several lively debates at the March Council meeting.

A motion on this year's A.G.M. agenda was being considered. It seeks to amend the rules governing the election of National Councillors to ensure that three (half) of them shall be under thirty years of age. No voice was raised in protest against the Hon. Treasurer's bold assertion that there was only one person in the room under thirty, though Mr. Surridge indulged in a little make-believe preening, probably occasioned by nostalgia.

"As I cannot dye my hair grey, I declare my interest," said the Vice-President (Mr. Tynemouth), urging that the motion be declared contentious, so that it should be submitted to the whole Association and not decided on a "snap vote" at an A.G.M. An unidentified speaker (my co-reporters have not yet reached Hansard standards) suggested that soon it would be possible to get on the Council only if one were a woman, under thirty, and serving in a county library south of the Wash. Not all

the National Councillors were silent on this question. Miss Willson, ruled out of order, but not, one hopes, for revealing her age, threatened resignation if the motion was carried, while Mr. Carver suggested that the colour of a person's eyes, indicating brain potential according to some authorities, might be a more valid qualification than age, or lack of it. The usually lucid Mr. W. G. Smith informed us that on this item G.L.D. representatives had been instructed to vote for a free vote. General laughter, a plea from Mr. McColvin for sanity and sense of proportion, and Council itself did just that.

Consideration of a memorandum by the previous Honorary Secretary on the implications of a Municipal Libraries Section of the L.A. created further healthy argument, and brought forth a spate of motions, amendments and counter-amendments to test the constitutional knowledge and customary calm of the President. In the end Council decided to retain an open mind on the subject pending further developments. Mr. W. G. Smith was unhappy about what he called a "do-nothing" attitude and wanted special librarians to offer ASLIB in exchange for a Municipal Libraries Section.

Three of four divisional motions were concerned with salaries, and it was decided to ask the Library Association to take full responsibility for informing members when salaries of advertised posts are considered inadequate. The fourth motion voiced the disapproval by the East Midland Division of the style and tone of a memorandum by the Honorary Secretary on library legislation. The representative from Devon and Cornwall revealed that a similar view had been taken by his divisional committee, but Mr. Parsonage dismissed it all as "a storm in a teacup," while Mr. W. G. Smith expressed surprise that anything so pompous could emanate from assistants. The motion was defeated.

With such a large Council it is necessary that much of the work should be done in committees. Press and Publications had considered a memorandum by the Honorary Editor on the division of the duties carried out by this Officer. Next year the Hon. Editor will be responsible for the *Assistant Librarian* only, while an Honorary Publications Officer will be responsible for seeing through the press the Association's growing number of publications. Registration students who have learnt well their proof-correcting signs should note that the Council will need candidates for both these offices before 1956. (See page 81).

The Education Committee's report revealed that correspondence course students completing their courses had achieved a 67 per cent. pass in the December examinations, with $14\frac{1}{2}$ merits and $\frac{1}{2}$ an honour! A letter which had been received, criticising one of the courses, raised the issue, live since before *Areopagitica*, of the freedom of the press. The Hon. Editor had promised to publish it; the Education Committee recommended that it should not be published. The Editor's right to publish what he thought fit was defended . . . and supported.

The special committee set up to consider the future administration of correspondence courses and the distribution of publications (5,640 sold last year) recommended the continuance of the A.A.L. policy of having honorary officers while recognising that substantial paid help would be required for these duties. The finances of the new arrangement were approved, and four of the officers appointed to interview three of the sixteen candidates who had answered the Council's advertisement.

The Thesis Committee, set up as a result of a motion carried at last year's A.G.M., presented a recommendation that a post-Finals thesis be

introduced to encourage research by Fellows of the Association, the work to be rewarded by "some form of Honours Diploma." A recommendation to this effect has been forwarded to the Library Association Council. The committee set up to formulate a policy for the A.A.L. reported progress. One of the recommendations was that the Diamond Jubilee issue of the *Assistant* should be devoted to the consideration of A.A.L. policy.

Finance and General Purposes Committee regretted that they had been unable to increase capitation payments to Divisions, and once again the inadequacy of the capitation received from the L.A., unchanged since the 1929 agreement, was underlined. Progress on the A.A.L.'s new film was reported: it is now apparently completed and edited, but not "married." This provoked the comment that it might have an X certificate. Council will have a private preview at their next meeting, and it is hoped to have a press showing together with "Index to Progress" shortly after. Negotiations are in hand for a TV. performance, and Mr. Bristow may have the opportunity to prove himself the first photogenic President.

The Council concluded with some able and incredibly detailed reporting of the L.A. Council business by the President. Shorthand or an unusually portable secretary must be among his assets.

In conclusion, thanks are due to those who have helped me to report some of the above items in such detail, with names, dialogue, etc. They shall be nameless—for their own safety at the next meeting.

ERIC MOON.

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“NOT TO HAVE READ MIDDLEMARCH”

by PEGGY FRANSELLA, *Senior Assistant, East Holborn Br. L.*

TURNING FROM the back page to the middle page of the T.L.S. one day in 1947, I was horrified to see these words: “Not to have read *Middlemarch* is a sign of intellectual poverty.” What was the use of a Grade I job if one knew oneself for an intellectual pauper? Needless to say our copy of *Middlemarch* was “not available,” but I managed to get a battered copy from the basement of another branch and with it restored my self-respect.

This was by no means the first or last time in my career that I have been appalled at the gaps in my reading. I arrived at Hammersmith in 1943 from the depths of the country with little or no knowledge of modern literature, although I was pretty well up in the pre-Shakespearean dramatists and Books II and III of the *Golden Treasury*. Such modern novels as I had read were a very odd selection either chosen for my mother by the local Boots or borrowed from equally indiscriminating friends at school. Fortunately my fellow library assistants were rather better-read than I, and they hastened to recommend their favourite authors to me. I read madly, spurred on by such remarks as “But you simply haven’t lived if you haven’t read . . .” Constant shelving, straightening and checking of reserves gave me a working knowledge of authors and titles and, one way and another, I soon acquired enough to be dangerous. I gaily recommended *The Waves* to a German lady who read English with only moderate ease, because I knew Virginia Woolf was “good.”

My peace of mind was again disturbed when I started classes for the Elementary Exam. which then contained a very valuable Literature paper. My Fifth and Sixth Form work had given me a detailed knowledge of certain small sections of English Literature, but it had left vast unexplored territories. Although my fellow juniors had done their best to remedy my ignorance, I found many new names in the list of modern novelists given us by our tutor and I got down to the job of reading at least one book by each.

I am annually depressed by the lists of “best novels” that the reviewers provide in the Sunday papers. I never seem to have read more than three or four and they produce a crop of scrap cards headed “Please reserve for P. Fransella.” By about June I catch up!

It is curious how everyone else at the Library is so much better-read than I am. A Staff Guild talk on the American novel by quite a newcomer to librarianship sent me scurrying to the shelves to borrow at least something by Faulkner. I was always dimly ashamed that I had not read *Madame Bovary*, but another Guild talk galvanized me into action last summer. I was forced to read Carson McCullers’s *Reflections in a golden eye* by the insistence of a kindly junior who offered it to me every time it was returned.

If the endeavours of the staff to improve my mind become irksome I can at least rebel, but recommendations from readers cannot be ignored if the library’s goodwill is to be maintained; and our readers seem just as anxious to give me advice as to ask for it. Reading *Middlemarch* may have saved me from the intellectual bread-line, but even a modest competence still seems a long way off. If ever achieved it will at least be free of income tax!

OUR LIBRARY SCHOOLS

by W. B. PATON, Chairman, L.A. Education Committee

IN HIS CONTRIBUTION ON OUR LIBRARY SCHOOLS in the March number of *The Assistant Librarian*, Thomas Clearwater belies his name. The bricks he has cast into the pond have muddled the waters and seriously impaired his clarity of vision, a process completed by fistfuls of dust recklessly scattered in the wake of the bricks for good measure. In case Thomas Clearwater has succeeded in misleading his readers as completely as he has bemused himself, it is necessary to challenge many of his assertions. His mis-statements or exaggerations include the following:—"We are sure that this renewed and widespread interest . . . is some evidence that serious problems are arising." If anyone receives from this an impression that the schools are heading for trouble or that crisis looms ahead (a not unwarranted interpretation of the phrase "serious problems"), then I am happy to give an unqualified assurance that there are no grounds whatever for such a suggestion. It may be, as Thomas Clearwater avers, that "in some sectors of the profession there is a good deal of feeling . . . about the schools," and that "from students and chief librarians . . . much criticism arises." If so, I have encountered neither, and I am as closely in touch with both branches of the profession, I imagine, as is Thomas himself. My experience convinces me that in the main the students are well satisfied with the services provided by the schools, and as a Chief Librarian who has benefited greatly from the employment of assistants trained in a library school (one of Thomas Clearwater's "secondary consumers"), I strongly refute his allegation of criticism. It is true that recently, in respect of one small school inadequately staffed, complaint has been received of inefficiency in organisation, but that relates to 17 students out of a total of several hundreds throughout the country, and gives no warrant whatever for the sweeping generalisations of T.C.

In matters of fact, Thomas Clearwater errs in ways that betray his limited knowledge of the overall situation in the schools, however relevant his statements may be in individual cases. For instance, it is a gross exaggeration that "a great deal of the teaching at full-time schools . . . is done by visiting lecturers." Insult is added to injury when these latter are superciliously dubbed as "minor deputy librarians, branch librarians, cataloguers and the like"—poor fish indeed! "The virtual non-existence of full-time Finals students" is hard to explain in a year when for the first time, full-time Final courses are functioning successfully in no less than four schools. Although I think that the Moderating Committees could be further improved and strengthened, I know from experience that they have already achieved valuable results, and must contradict the statement that the Moderating Committees have not yet become effective.

These serious inaccuracies of fact will no doubt weigh with readers in their judgment of Thomas Clearwater's sweeping statements on wider issues. He discerns a difference in "calibre" between those who teach in our schools, and those who administer our libraries, using as yardstick, apparently, the sole criterion of administrative ability. It is indeed a naive assumption that because a man is a successful Chief Librarian, he is therefore a good teacher. In fact, the tendency may well be in the opposite direction, for the qualities required for effective lecturing need not coincide with those which bring success in executive duties. Whether the lecturers in our schools have been Chief Librarians or not is largely beside the point. What is important is that they are enthusiasts in their vital work, are willing to continue as students themselves, retain open minds, approach their task with vision, experiment with new ideas and

methods, and inspire interest and enthusiasm in their students. From personal knowledge, I consider that as a profession we are fortunate in the quality of the men and women who staff our library schools, and that the criticism they have received at the hands of Thomas Clearwater is quite unwarranted. On the general question of calibre, and as an effective answer to T.C.'s snobbish query, "The head of such and such a school—who is he, and what has he done?" it is worth noting that the Head of one of our schools topped the poll at a recent L.A. annual election, and another Head came second.

With the recent publication of the full list of examiners, the truth, or otherwise, of the statement that our examiners are in the main experienced Chief Librarians and elder statesmen, can be judged by readers themselves. At least fifty per cent. of examiners up to Registration standard belong to the despised categories of "minor deputy librarians, branch librarians, cataloguers and the like."

The tacit assumption throughout Clearwater's article that our library schools are failing to measure up to modern requirements, and are poorly regarded by the profession; his description of them as in danger of becoming "mere appendages of our professional education and life, liable to lose the broad support of librarians," and his statement that "the student is One Down to begin with" are most effectively refuted by the following fact:—At the June, 1954, examination, two-thirds of all the students who completed the Registration examination attended a course at a full-time School of Librarianship. HOW NOW, THOMAS?

This journal and this Association have always welcomed forthright and constructive criticism, and although adequate machinery exists for the investigation of complaints by correspondence course students (mentioned by the Hon. Education Secretary below), the following letter is published in the hope that it will be seen as an invitation to all members to give voice to their criticisms and suggestions regarding any aspect of the Association's work.

A STUDENT WRITES :

Now that Mrs. Firth [January Assistant] has started the hare of correspondence courses, can I follow it up with some thoughts that occurred to me during a course I took last year? I must confess that the course gave me a far better coverage of the syllabus than I had realised at the time. It had not, however, given me any confidence.

Let me start with the timing of the ten monthly lessons. The first set of answers was due back on the 30th May, and thereafter a set was due on the 30th of each month up to Lesson 10 due back on 28th February. There was no break during the summer, so that when I went on holiday a month's course had to be completed in a fortnight. In any case, there is scarcely time to adequately cover the material and write six answers in a month. I would suggest that instead of the student being left on his own for four months between answering his last lesson and facing the examiners, six weeks would be a more suitable period for revision, and the remaining weeks be spread over the year, allowing more time for each lesson.

The introductory notes warned me that "the syllabus for the examination in historical bibliography is so wide that lessons can only serve as a guide to what must be read and learnt." It gave no definition of

"historical bibliography" nor attempted to explain its importance to me as a librarian. The "Outline of course" didn't come until I received the last set of lesson papers.

The masterpiece of the course was the list of "Basic text books"—over 100 of them, in alphabetical order of authors, which Esdaile calls "mere intellectual laziness or want of imagination." Surely on a topic which is part of our own professional knowledge it is possible to produce something more useful. It is true that the "most important" books were marked with an asterisk, though the standard of importance seems to have been rather an odd one. *The story of maps*, by L. A. Brown, to which there was one reference (pp. 150-179), had an asterisk, but not so G. D. Hobson's *Maioli, Canevari and others*. Indeed, there was no book on bindings among the "most important" and no book on papermaking in the list at all. Curwen's *Processes of graphic reproduction* was in the list of text-books but no readings were given from it.

"A word of warning about titles—do try to remember them exactly," said the introductory notes. Would that the compiler had remembered his own precept. He would certainly not have passed "Advanced Cat. and Class." with his variations between "RICCI, S. de" and "De Ricci," and between "DAVIES, B. N. L." and "Langdon-Davies." Then there was a reading, "Gray, *A note on music engraving and printing*" with no author's initials or date of publication.

When Binns was added to the list, someone went to the trouble of giving page-references from it to each group of readings. Yet at the end of lesson 4, on modern printing methods, the readings consisted of four complete books, one in six volumes and another in two, and added for good measure "and any other handbooks of general printing practice which may be available to you !

Perhaps the chief objection to the lists of readings was the infuriating way in which parallel readings from a number of general histories were given (of which one would have been sufficient) while the really useful material was often buried in "supplementary readings." The student's time was thus wasted by repetition of secondary material.

In September, Mrs. Martin sent me the Education Committee's apologies for the errors I had noted (in lesson four). Her letter concluded (my italics): "*As soon as they are noticed* a corrections sheet is issued with the course." The three foolscap pages of "Corrections and Additions" were dated January—and managed to include a few minor errors of their own. Many of the errors could have been spotted easily, but that is scarcely an excuse for them. The lesson on binding had suffered badly, with wrong members of families or binders receiving the honours. Certainly as far as I was concerned the most annoying of the errors were the incorrect references to periodical articles. My nearest large reference library is unfortunately closed-access so that the staff had to trot forwards and backwards finding the right issues for me. The reference to an article on a William Pickering was correct except that it referred not to the nineteenth-century publisher of that name whom I was then studying but to the first book-seller on London Bridge. While I know that this is a standard course, surely the tutors have copies; yet mine asked to what reading I referred when I mentioned this Pickering article. She is also under the impression that the Monotype Corporation issued the Gill "Pilgrim" type!

So far I have been criticising. I am prepared to believe that this was an exceptionally bad course, but the fact remains that the Association published it. I would, however, like to make some suggestions.

Firstly, the list of text-books. As it stands it is useless. I can see

the point of an alphabetical list of all the books from which readings are to be given, if the list gives full enough bibliographical information for quick consultation of library catalogues; the readings can then be given either by the author's name or an abbreviated title. It would probably be more expedient, however, to give such bibliographical information in a list more usefully arranged.

My list would start with the very small number of books which the student will want by him continually; in this case, say Esdaile, Binns and McKerrow. Then, arranged by lessons or groups of lessons, would come the books the student will need during parts of the course; Updike, for example, during the lessons on printing. My list would try to differentiate between the books the student should usefully have at his elbow and those from which his consultations could as easily be made in a reference library. There will probably be students whose lack of reference facilities will negative the chief value of this, though it would indicate which books would be most usefully borrowed. The list should also, I think, show the readings from parallel general studies as alternatives, to be read if time allows.

If this list of books as required lesson-by-lesson were sent out at the start of the course the student would be in a much better position to assemble the material he required in time for his wanting it. And could not the stencils be independently checked for references before being run off?

For the lesson notes, they could surely provide a more useful resumé of essential facts (and better presented) as a starting-point for, and guide to, the student's further reading.

COLSTON M. HARTLEY,
Senior Assistant, West Riding C.L.

[The Hon. Education Secretary replies :—

The Education Committee greatly regrets that there has been cause for complaint in respect of this particular correspondence course. Since their introduction after the war, standard courses for no less than seventeen sections of the syllabus have been produced and are being maintained. This is no inconsiderable task and means a great deal of hard and tedious work for a number of already busy librarians. The compilers are, of course, fully qualified and the editors acknowledged experts in their particular subjects. It follows, therefore, that it is unlikely that any course is "an exceptionally bad course." (Of the eight students who sat the June and December, 1954, examinations after taking the Final, Part 4 (d) course, seven were successful, two with merit). The course in question, in any case a difficult one comprising 71 stencils, represented a great deal of effort and time by both compiler and editor. New editions of courses are normally issued every two years, unless the requirements of the syllabus demand otherwise, when improvements in their presentation are incorporated. During the interim period, amendments and additions sheets are added to keep the notes and readings up to date. It is hoped that the method, adopted this year, of listing recommended textbooks lesson by lesson will prove more useful to students.

It will be appreciated that the majority of members of the tutoring panel are already engaged in full-time jobs, but are willing to co-operate in the work of helping, to the best of their ability, those colleagues in the profession who wish for guidance in their attempts to pass the examinations. Full instructions are issued by the Education Committee to tutors as to the conduct of the courses, and one of these is that the course should be spread over the specified session, allowing for holiday and revision periods. In the Instructions to Students, issued as part of the course, students are asked to send any com-

ments, complaints, recommendations, etc., to the Hon. Education Secretary, who will place them before the Committee for consideration and investigation. This is the only way in which the Committee can keep in touch with the students in a method of tuition where close contact is difficult. All students are asked to co-operate in this way, thus doing their part in helping to effect as efficient a service as is humanly possible in the circumstances in which the courses are offered at as low a cost as possible.]

OTHER CORRESPONDENCE

(including a number of letters unavoidably held over from April).

JUNIOR ASSISTANTS

Some points from letters received in response to the article in our February issue.

Miss Wilden-Hart spoils her latest shrewd contribution to this journal by the inclusion of these revolting terms: 1, Counter hands; 2, Immature sub-professionals; 3, Mature sub-professionals . . .

May I substitute: 1, Clerical, yes, just Clerical, assistants; 2, Professional trainees; after which I believe one just becomes a Chartered Librarian? At what precise point in training would Miss Wilden-Hart draw a *general* distinction between professional immaturity and professional maturity, in order to establish the separate posts she suggests? As she rightly says, "the staff . . . are first and foremost individuals."

P. J. BANKS,
Assistant, Chiswick P.L.

At present salaries the public library has little to offer the intelligent clerical worker who would be required to operate the administrative branch of librarianship efficiently. The typist, filing clerk or counter hand can command a salary higher than local authorities are prepared to offer assistant librarians . . .

We are all familiar with the fact that the younger members of the staff, among whom the majority of clerical tasks are now allocated, frequently spend longer over a job than its importance merits. A similar mistake could not be tolerated in a full-trained clerical worker, who must therefore possess an intelligence and ability no less than that of the librarian. . . .

Would it be too much to suggest that we advocate paying the counter hand and clerk considerably more than the general assistant, to ensure an efficient library system, able to do its job and to train its recruits?

P. C. F. SAMPSON,
Royal Air Force.

It is a pity that Miss Wilden-Hart has allowed her determination to be outspoken at all costs to obscure, if for a moment, her judgment. In her article in your February issue she has this aside: "(in point of fact many graduates are professionally very immature)." I can see no sound reason whatever for this remark. Graduates are professionally immature when they enter the profession; but so, surely, is every other new entrant, and it is no cause for criticism. She cannot mean that graduates *remain* immature, for she says herself (*Record*, March, 1954, p. 100) that "it is the experience they receive at the university that makes their minds mature," and a mature mind can easily assimilate the "techniques and methods which are the main concern of the librarian at this level." If your readers will look at the article and delete this aside, they will see that Miss Wilden-Hart's argument is not in the least affected.

D. J. FOSKETT,
Information Officer, Metal Box Co., Ltd.

Miss Wilden-Hart states that "as in commerce, so in libraries assistants should know that the customer is never mistaken, though in extreme cases he may make pardonable errors"! I wonder why? Surely there is a world of difference between a

public library and a grocer's shop, both in theory and in fact?

The library is a public service paid for by the reader, whether he wants it or not. If he is dissatisfied, he can legitimately complain and something may be done to obviate the ground of his complaint. If he is definitely infringing a rule or refusing to obey one, he must be amenable or get out. If he considers a rule, whether bye-law or regulation, unjust he is at liberty to campaign against it—he must, however, continue to abide by it if he wishes to remain a reader until or unless it is repealed or amended (as in the case of fines).

All readers are entitled to courtesy, some even require sympathy; demanding, selfish types are emphatically not if they behave abominably in the library. Self-abasement before such a person might have become a slave in Augustus' public library at Rome: it does *not* become an allegedly professional librarian of to-day.

J. M. D. CROSSEY,
Assistant, Belfast P.L.

CATALOGUING RULES

Mr. Sharp's and Miss Winter's contributions to the above correspondence would seem to require some further comment from me.

Miss Winter asks me why I scouted the idea, advanced by Miss Morton in initiating this correspondence, of A.A.L. Divisions forming Revision committees for cataloguing rules. I should have thought the futility of *more* committees for this purpose would have been self-evident. Surely, what is wanted is one or two *individuals* with the necessary drive to get something done.

Mr. Sharp is of course, perfectly right in castigating Miss Morton for her reference to "pettifogging rules." In cataloguing, it is not the average, straightforward book or heading which causes difficulty, but the oddity for which we must have explicit rules if inconsistency is to be avoided. It is surprising how often one needs these so-called "pettifogging" rules.

I did not expect Mr. Sharp to like

my references to L.A. apathy on cataloguing code revision, but in my opinion his reply in no way invalidates my contentions. I was aware of the reference to the British Committee in *A.L.A. Cataloging Rules*, 1949, but, placed at the end of the preface, is it not rather a colourless and formal footnote? The British Committee were evidently "informed." What proof is there that they were consulted or that "general agreement [was] assured?" Even if the 1941 preliminary edition profited by British suggestions, these were surely largely negated by the through-going changes of 1949, on which no word of British co-operation is admitted.

Does Mr. Sharp in his statement that the Cataloguing Rules Sub-Committee has met monthly since May, 1951, imply that it took six years from the end of the war for this Sub-Committee to be reconstituted? If so, my charge of dilatoriness seems amply justified. His question whether Cutter on subject cataloguing (after fifty years!) can be bettered hardly argues a constructive attitude on the part of the Sub-Committee. Margaret Mann, Sears, Frick and other exponents of modern practice do not exactly see eye to eye with Cutter on place v. topic headings, for instance.

The few sessions of the Inquiry on Cataloguing Principles and Practice which I attended disappointed me. As a practising librarian, convinced by experience of the value to the public of a properly constructed dictionary catalogue, I offered a contribution to the Inquiry, based on the practice of this not untypical library. I had no acknowledgment of the offer and I came away from the sessions sadder but no wiser.

E. O. REED,
Borough Librarian, Chelmsford.

As another student struggling to master the A-A Code rules, I entirely agree with Miss Morton. And at the risk of sounding naïve, I should like to say that one would scarcely term the taking of four years to revise a part of the Code, progression. Miss

Morton's suggestion, which is as Miss Winter said, a sound constructive criticism and not merely a complaint, however justified, might help to make this "progression" a little sharper.

MISS C. CUERDEN,
*Student, Manchester School of
Librarianship.*

I was most interested to read Mr. Sharp's letter on cataloguing in the March issue, and I can well understand his irritation. However, I feel that the situation which led to this correspondence does suggest that there is a lack of contact between Chaucer House and the members at large. The dry statement that "the Sub-Committee met x times during the year and considered y rules" is no satisfaction for those who are interested and want to know what is going on. A recent letter to the *Record* recalling the fate of the committee which did a lot of work on cataloguing of gramophone records cannot have made members feel any happier.

Why is there such reticence to let us know what ideas are being put forward? Certainly I concede that it would be inadvisable to publish the British provisional decisions *as such*, but is there any harm in publishing them (and important minority proposals) for information, discussion and comment? There is a most extraordinary difference between the British and the American attitudes to this question. Here, apparently, the sub-committee is keeping very quiet until it is ready to spring the whole set of proposals on us at once; in America, each individual question is liable to be much discussed in the professional press, especially in the *Journal of Cataloging and Classification*. Rival rules are set side by side and comments are encouraged. In a recent issue of the *Journal of Cataloging and Classification* there was even an appeal from the American committee for cataloguers and library schools to make their own "case studies" of rules which they consider need revision, and to send the results to the Committee.*

I would like to ask a fundamental question, which I hope Mr. Sharp will

be kind enough to answer. What is the basis on which the sub-committee is working? Is it discussing the existing rules one by one, or is it reviewing the whole structure of the Code, perhaps along the lines suggested by Lubetzky?—and if not, why not? That is to say, can we expect merely a revision of the old code rules, or a completely new Code worked up from scratch from basic principles? While the British sub-committee keeps so quiet, the profession cannot know whether it will get the sort of Code which it wants (if it knows what it wants!) until it has got it. In the meantime there will doubtless continue to be attacks which annoy Mr. Sharp so much.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Sharp for all the work he has done throughout so many years for cataloguers and students, interpreting a Code for us which is *not* simple and which *does* contain some pettifoggish rules. Let us hope that his career will be crowned with a Code which will be the admiration of the profession the world over.

A. G. CURWEN,
*Assistant, Westminster Central
Reference Library.*

*My letter was written before I received the March issue of the *Record* containing Mr. Sharp's appeal for help with anonymous and pseudonymous entries. I welcome this—and duly climb down a number of pegs!

CLASSIFICATION

*In reply to Mr. Coates' letter in the
March issue.*

My original review of Sayers' *Introduction* [November, 1954] was directed to the examination student and my reply to Mr. Coates in the January *Assistant* attempted to underline this fact, pointing out that the L.A. examiners had, rightly or wrongly, omitted the Colon scheme from the syllabus. May I assure Mr. Coates that I was by no means unhappy in defending my review which, incidentally, Mr. Sayers himself has considered a "fair

and discriminating one." It would appear that Mr. Coates is easily disturbed; even without a preliminary waving of the proverbial red, white, blue or other coloured rag, he is so incensed that he must rush into the ring in order to condemn the traditional methods of training and plead for a more "coherent and constructive approach" in the use of a book scheme whose fundamental principles, in theory and in practice, were fixed very many years ago.

His fervent and ardent recommendation of this approach is no doubt coloured, however unconsciously, by his day to day routine duties far removed from the sceptic world. It is this type of theoretical mumbo-jumbo which he enunciates so pontifically, which conceals in a "froth of mystique," the essential practical nature of a book classification. I cannot believe that classifiers, past and present, famous and infamous, have all possessed to so great a degree the faculty of intuition to which Mr. Coates attributes their puny efforts to produce practical numbers.

To summarize, may I suggest that tutors and students would be well advised to ignore the intellectual exercises of Ranganathan and B.N.B. when preparing for the Registration Examination. By so doing, they may help in retaining a certain clarity in a subject which seems to attract the enthusiastic but so often involved and misguided theoretician.

C. W. TAYLOR,
*Central Lending Librarian,
Sheffield P.L.*

[This correspondence is now closed.—
Hon Ed.]

MEETINGS

As Mr. Chapman [in the March issue] insists that I have skated round his argument, here is my direct answer to his question. The staff guild may subsidise a junior (not necessarily a teenager) because it is he or she who needs professional encouragement. The man who has embarked on marriage, children and a mortgage has indeed demonstrated professional en-

thusiasm in undertaking these commitments on an assistant librarian's salary. I do not mean to imply that a staff guild should not subsidise married men; I only suggested that at an *assistants'* conference junior staff should be better represented. At the A.A.L. conferences that I have attended the married men have greatly outnumbered the junior assistants, both male and female.

JEAN BINDER,
Reference Librarian, St. Albans P.L.

It may be of interest to your members to know that the Manchester Public Libraries Staff Association is paying two-thirds of the expenses of one of its younger members in order that she can attend the Sixth Annual Week-end Conference at Birmingham. This is a direct result of Miss Binder's letter in your August, 1954 number.

EDNA M. WOOD,
*Chairman, Education Sub-Committee,
Manchester P.L. Staff Association.*

INDEXES

The suggestion for an index to books of a discursive nature [April Editorial] is admirable, but since we have no English H. W. Wilson firm to prepare such an index for us, I fear the proposal is likely to remain just another good idea. The B.N.B. idea is suggested as one of three possible approaches to the problem. In the good old days before the B.N.B. came along and took some of our cataloguing from us, it was the pleasant task of the cataloguer to determine the subject of a book for himself. In many cases it was necessary to dip into the book and perhaps skim through many a section before coming to a decision. It was surprising how much general information was gleaned about the contents of the books being catalogued. Short of reading them all, there is no surer way of getting to know books than having to catalogue them. There is much talk these days of releasing professionals from non-professional duties and the B.N.B. has been hailed as one way of doing this, the cataloguing being left to the typist! Fortunately for our know-

